

Virginia's children are finishing up their first month of school, hard at work brushing up on their reading, writing and math skills. Many adults find that they need to brush up on their math skills, too, especially when it comes to their finances. Financial literacy is crucial to family success and independence. Check out some of the online tools and materials available to help keep your budget in line and your child support payments timely.

The following is a list of online resources to help you create budgets and savings plans (for vehicles, college retirement, etc.), as well as learning more about your credit score, debt, banking and other financial matters. In addition, there are many of the same kinds of resources available to help you teach your child the same lessons so that they are financially savvy as they make their way toward adulthood.

- www.practicalmoneyskills.com – This site is sponsored by VISA, and is a complete financial resource. There are countless articles on virtually any subject related to your finances, calculators to help you crunch numbers and educational games to help your children learn the same skills. There is truly something for everyone.
- <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/consumer.shtm> – The FTC sponsors this site, and it includes valuable information and tips not only about your finances, but about other consumer issues, too. Advice is given on buying consumer goods (including electronics, home improvement and clothing), health, education, job placement, identity theft and a variety of other related topics.
- <http://www.irs.gov/app/understandingTaxes/student/index.jsp> – You'll find everything you need to know about taxes here. This site is maintained by the IRS and offers activities, tutorials, simulations and assessments to help you learn all of the "hows" and "whys" of your annual taxes.
- <http://www.gcflearnfree.org/everydaylife> – Geared more towards children and teens, this site features several interactive lessons that range from banking to following maps. They will go through the "Everyday Life" interactions and learn from the experience without real-world consequences.
- <http://www.familymint.com/> – Family Mint is a fantastic resource to help teach children and teens to be money-smart in a true learn-by-doing environment, but without any actual financial risk. The model is set up so that your child sets financial goals and manages their money via the website, as with real online banking, but you act as the bank. That way, all transactions are run through you for approval, preventing loss of real funds due to mistakes by the child. There is a free plan and a paid one, both offering excellent financial education.